



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1893-08-15

Letter from John Muir to Louie [Strentzel Muir], 1893 Aug 15.

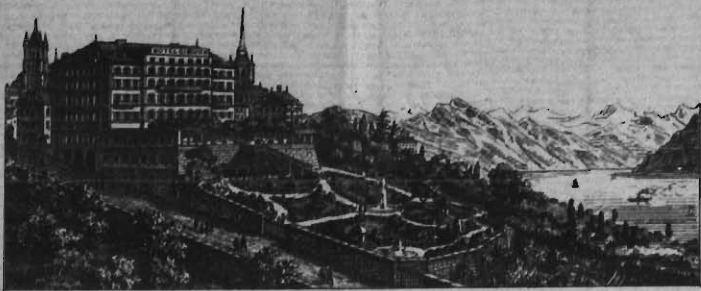
John Muir

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Lausanne

Hôtel Gibbon

Emile Ritter Prop.
(Ascenseur-Lift)

Lausanne, le Aug. 15. 1893

Dear Louie. This is a hot but lovely calm Indian Summerish morning in a beautiful old town. I arrived late last night & am off this morning for Gernatt when I hope to be cooled & shrouded beneath the shadows of the grand icy Alps.

I have just been taking a short walk to a garden & terrace overlooking the town & commanding a grand view over the lovely ^{Geneva} Lake to the farms & vineyards & mountains in the hazy distance.

It is now about 9.30 o'clock I had an exceedingly interesting ride up the valley of the Rhon after skirting the lovely Lake Geneva for 30 or 40 miles. The Rhon is a wild roaring stream thick with glacial mud brought from the flanks of the Jungfrau, Monte Rosa, Matterhorn & many other monarchs of the Alps. Here at a height of 5230 ft above the sea the valley ends in glaciers coming in from all directions, & the views are wonderful even to me. The Matterhorn in particular is one of the wildest strangest looking peaks I ever saw.

a huge savage pyramid: a triumphant monument
 of Nature's glacial sculpture piercing the heavens in
 lonely serene majesty. I am again in the heart of the
 Alps, but on account of haze have not yet seen
 Mt Blanc, but will soon, as I intend going to
 Chamounix tomorrow or next day. I had not the
 slightest difficulty in coming up the valley today
 in solving the problem that puzzled Tyndall
 why does the Rhone valley bend so suddenly at
 Martigny? It was caused by the enormous flood
 of ice which united with the main trunk from Mt-
 Blanc & peaks adjacent - Indeed I had solved this
 problem before leaving California simply by looking
 at the map of Switzerland. I arrived here about

5 O'clock & took a good long walk up towards the
 glaciers. They look small as compared with those of Alaska
 mere shriveled receding remnants, but glorious they
 were in their prime, & glorious is the work they
 have done. Such a wilderness of gigantic peaks
 such a labyrinth of profound canyons & valleys, &
 such immense beds of gravel & soil spread over
 the plains of Belgium even to the sea shore
 a hundred miles or more.

The larch as well as spruce is a common tree here. In my
 walk this evening I found the common garden crocus
 wild in meadows in great abundance & many other
 pretty flowers, a few of which I send you. I had a
 cold caught in a railroad car but am getting rid
 of it in this mountain air. How glad I would be for
 a word from home saying "all well" Heaven bless that you all.

Hello Midge - Hello Wanda -
 Here are some pretty flowers from Switzerland, they grow near a big glacier

Lausanne
Hotel Gibbon

Lausanne, 1st Aug. 15, 1893

Dear Louise-This is a hot but lovely calm Indian Summerish morning in a beautiful old town. I arrived late last night and am off this morning for Zermatt where I hope to be cooled and stirred beneath the shadows of the grand Alps.

I have just been taking a short walk to a garden and terrace overlooking the town and commanding a grand view over the lovely Lausanne Geneva lake to the farms and vineyards and mountains in the hazy distance.

Zermatt

It is now about 9:30 o'clock. I had an exceedingly interesting ride up the valley of the Rhone after skirting the lovely Lake Geneva for 30 or 40 miles. The Rhone is a wild roaring stream thick with glacial mud ground from the flanks of the Jungfrau, Mount Rosa, Matterhorn and many other monarchs of the Alps. Here at a height of 5250 ft. above the sea the valley ends in glaciers coming in from all directions, and the views are wonderful even to me. The Matterhorn in particular is one of the wildest strangest looking peaks I ever saw, a huge savage pyramid a triumphant monument of nature's glacial sculpture piercing the heavens in lonely serene majesty. I am again in the heart of the Alps, but on account of haze have not yet seen Mt. Blanc, but will soon, as I intend going to Chamounix tomorrow or next day. I had not the slightest difficulty coming up the valley today in solving the problem that puzzled Tyndall. Why does the Rhone valley bend so suddenly at Martigny? It was caused by the enormous floods of ice which united with the main trunk from Mt. Blanc and peaks adjacent--Indeed I had solved the problem before leaving California simply by looking at the map of Switzerland. I arrived here about 5 o'clock and took a good long walk up towards the glaciers. They looked small as compared with those of Alaska, mere shriveled receding remnants, but glorious they were in their prime, and glorious is the work they have done. Such a wilderness of gigantic peaks such a labyrinth of profound canons (canyons) and valleys, and such immense beds of gravel and soil spread over the plains of Belgium even to the seashore a hundred miles or more.

The larch as well as spruce is a common tree here. In my walk this evening I found the common garden crocus wild in meadows in great abundance, and many other pretty flowers a few of which I send you. I had a cold caught in a railroad car but am getting rid of it in this mountain air. How glad I would be for a word from home saying "All Well". Heaven bless you all.

Hello Midge, hello Wanda. Here are some pretty flowers from Grindelwald, they grew near a big glacier. Love to Grandma, Maggie, Dave, and all the family- Ever yours

John Muir